

# Preventing Laminitis.....

*Once you realise how excruciatingly painful this condition is, you would **never** allow it to happen!*

*Prevention is simple once you understand the cause*

## **Causes:**

1. Any major infection in the body such as retained placenta
2. Injury causing constant weight bearing on the 'good leg' inducing laminitis in that leg
3. Fructans in rye-grass
4. Excess NSC's (non-structural carbohydrate) or sugar in the diet (too much green grass & clover)

## **Sources of NSC's**

- Green, growing grass, especially when short
- Grains, especially when coated in molasses
- Apples, carrots, bread

## **Who Suffers?**

Horses, ponies and dairy cows

## **The worst pasture for causing it?**

Rye-Grass and Clover

Rye-grass stores it's sugars as fructans which horses and ponies cannot digest. When fructans reach the hind-gut, the Streptococcus bacteria have a feast and a population explosion, destroying the 'good' flora and triggering laminitis. Rye-grass is 'skull & cross-bones' for horses and ponies, get rid of it.



Clover stores it's sugars as starch which horses and ponies *can* digest, only too readily. There is way too much starch stored in those fat, round clover leaves! An absolute 'no no' for horses and ponies, get rid of it too.

A diet too high in sugars has the same effect in causing laminitis. This is called 'Metabolic Syndrome'.

There is plenty of warning: horses and ponies become 'easy keepers', and obese, develop cresty necks, pads of fat behind the shoulders and on the tail-head, they drink a lot, get puffy around the eyes, their sheath and other areas.

By the time you see all these symptoms there is already significant damage to the laminae of the hooves.

Every time the horse or pony gets sloppy manure there is damage to the delicate laminae which knit the hoof wall to the coffin bone. This is why rotating pastures is not a good idea. As

soon as horses or ponies are put on the fresh grass they get a bout of acidosis and this detrimentally harms the hooves.

The key to prevention of laminitis is to feed high fibre, low sugar diets, encourage plenty of exercise and feed top quality vitamins and minerals.

Be proactive and prevent. It is so much better all round than being in crisis mode at the bottom of the cliff trying to rehabilitate a laminitic horse!!

## **Once horses and ponies have had laminitis they are so much more prone to have repeat episodes.**

For these ponies you need somewhere to keep them during times of grass growth (most of the year except in drought or in mid winter.)

For most of the year you need to apply the utmost diligence to **KEEP THEM OFF ANYTHING GREEN!!!!**

I can't tell you how many times people tell me they have taken the horse/pony off the grass only to find on inspection that there is grass there, short as it may be.

Short grass is stressed grass and it is worse! It is higher in NSC's and protein and lacking in fibre.

No green grass means no green grass.

I was talking to Dr Lucy Tucker recently (she is an equine nutritionist and writes for the Horse & Pony). I totally agree with her when she says the worst things possible are 'starvation' or 'Jenny Craig' paddocks. Putting horses and ponies on these paddocks with no supplementary feed is tantamount to starving them. This is cruel, harmful and unnecessary. Think about it they are getting no fibre and no nutrients. They will be likely to develop stomach ulcers from the lack of bulk going thru their system.

If they are in there but you are supplementing with plenty of hay and a good feed which includes some protein, omega oils, vitamins and minerals, then that is OK.

Using grazing muzzles without feeding the horse or pony is tantamount to starvation also. Make sure they get plenty of hay and a feed with all their goodies.

## **Soaked Hay**

This is a great way to reverse metabolic syndrome. Soaking overnight in a tub (throw the brown, fizzy water on the garden) reduces sugar content by 30% (Katy Watts [www.safergrass.org](http://www.safergrass.org)).

By soaking the sugar out of the hay you can give them enough so they've got something to chew on all day. Horses and ponies have an innate need to chew, it is essential to keep up saliva production which helps neutralise strong stomach acids and to keep them contented.

## **What to Feed Founder Prone Horses & Ponies**

Ad lib soaked hay

Soaked Eezy Beet or Speedibeet

Small portions of soya bean meal and/or sunflower seeds

Omega 3 Oil

Vitamin & Mineral Mixes which are comprehensive and include organic magnesium & chromium

Hand grazing on mature roadside grass is OK

## **What NOT to feed**

NO GREEN GRASS

NO LUCERNE

NO GRAINS

NO MOLASSES

NO APPLES OR CARROTS

NO OATEN CHAFF

Hi Jenny

Just a short note to say how much I enjoy your notes and how great I think your ideas and resource information is.

AFTER YOUR TALK IN Invercargill LAST YEAR WE TRACKED OUR WEE PONIES AND ONE LARGE GIRL WHO HAS A WEIGHT PROBLEM THE DIFFERENCE OVER SUMMER WAS FANTASTIC.

IT WAS SO GREAT TO SEE THEM CANTERING ROUND THEIR TRACK INSTEAD OF APPEARING FOOTSORE & TIPPY TOE.

AND SHOCK AND HORROR (against everything I'd ever been told about feeding hay) THE SOAKING OF THE HAY WORKED GREAT, THEY LOVE IT AND WITH THEIR DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS ARE DOING SO WELL.

THANK YOU

CAROL Invercargill

## Encouraging Movement

'Locking them up' is far from ideal as horses need to be moving all day long to keep their circulation going and stay healthy.

### Make a Track

Can be done with tape to start with. Using your imagination and the available terrain make a track around the perimeter of your paddock. If it has too much grass, especially if it is rye-grass and clover then it pays to spray it out.

**Hand Walk** as often as possible. Bigger horses can be ridden when they are comfortable

**Obtain the services of a good barefoot trimmer.** This is vital for encouraging the new hoof wall to grow down with good connection to the coffin bone.

**The combination of good diet (high fibre/low carb) with excellent Vitamins & Minerals, plenty of exercise and proper hoof trimming are all necessary for prevention and rehabilitation of laminitic horses and ponies**



**“Dimples” (17yrs) July 5<sup>th</sup> 08 Sore feet, reluctant to move at all.**



**July 10<sup>th</sup>, after living in a round pen with ‘Charlie’ for company, trotting around, much brighter and happier already**

We will be feeding her Alleviante & Premium New-Zealand-Horse Minerals and she should shed her coat come spring. You can see how long and curly it is, she is showing classic signs of ‘Cushings Like-Syndrome’ from the lifelong high carbohydrate diet and multiple bouts of laminitis.